



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich's Remarks to members of the American Bar Association

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**Introduction of Noel Pearson  
to visiting members of the American Bar Association  
at Gilbert + Tobin Law Firm, Sydney**

*(As prepared for delivery – February 8, 2010)*

It is said that the quality of any civilized society is measured by how it treats its least fortunate members. If that is our test, then the ultimate measure of U.S. society must be how we treat our indigenous Native Americans. The experience of the indigenous populations of the United States and Australia has been strikingly similar, and similarly tragic. Having represented Native Americans in U.S. court cases, I have seen first-hand the terrible effect of past injustices. I also have seen the difficulty of correcting those injustices. In fact, I have seen just as clearly the terrible effects of well-meaning, but misguided efforts to address the challenges of indigenous communities. Both our countries recognize our responsibility to right these injustices, and both of us have struggled to find solutions.

So I look forward to Mr. Pearson's talk, because I believe we can learn from each other's experiences. There is no simple solution. But that does not excuse us from trying. If anything, it requires that we try harder. Because that will be a measure of our society – did we right past wrongs; do we assure equal opportunity for all. I am grateful for the chance to learn from our Australian colleagues, and to work with them to meet the challenge of delivering hope and opportunity to all people.

Thank you.